

WASHINGTON – Four leading Members of the House Oversight and Government Reform committee today sent a [joint letter](#) to President Barack Obama asking him to nominate a candidate for the long vacant position of State Department Inspector General. Signatories on the letter included House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa, Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings, Subcommittee on National Security Chairman Jason Chaffetz and Ranking Member John F. Tierney.

“The Department has not had a Senate-confirmed Inspector General since 2008, which is the longest vacancy of any of the 73 Inspector General positions across the federal government,” the four Members state in their letter to the President. “During your entire first term as President, you did not nominate anyone to serve in this critical position. This failure evidences a clear disregard for the Inspector General Act and the will of Congress.”

“In the context of the upcoming confirmation hearings for Senator John Kerry as your nominee to become the next Secretary of State, we are sure that the question of who you plan to nominate to serve as Inspector General for the State Department will be a top priority for Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle.”

On May 10, 2012, the Committee held a hearing on Inspector General (IG) vacancies, which found bipartisan agreement that a lack of permanent leadership compromises the effectiveness of investigative offices. According to the Foreign Service Act of 1980, in addition to investigating government waste, fraud and abuse, the State Department Inspector General is responsible for inspecting the many Department bureaus and posts around the world.

The Jan. 24 joint letter is copied below and can be found [here](#) .

January 24, 2013

The President

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committee and Subcommittee in the House of Representatives with primary jurisdiction over Inspectors General (IGs), we are writing to urge you to immediately nominate a qualified, independent, permanent Inspector General for the Department of State.

The Department has not had a Senate-confirmed Inspector General since 2008, which is the longest vacancy of any of the 73 Inspector General positions across the federal government. The last Senate-confirmed Inspector General at the State Department was Howard Krongard. During your entire first term as President, you did not nominate anyone to serve in this critical position. This failure evidences a clear disregard for the Inspector General Act and the will of Congress. It is particularly troubling given that, in addition to combating waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement, the State Department Inspector General is required by the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to perform inspections of the Department's bureaus and posts around the world.

The effectiveness of an Inspector General's office is diminished when it does not have permanent, independent leadership. As the Government Accountability Office reported:

Independence is a fundamental principle to the auditing profession and the most critical element for IG effectiveness. Without independence, an audit organization cannot conduct independent audits in compliance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Likewise, an IG who lacks independence cannot effectively fulfill the full range of requirements of the office.

On May 10 of last year, the Committee held a hearing on Inspector General vacancies during which there was bipartisan agreement that extended vacancies and temporary leadership compromise the intent of the Inspector General Act and weaken the independence of the offices. Although a temporary Inspector General may attempt to fulfill the functions of the position with diligence and professionalism, a permanent Senate-confirmed Inspector General provides several advantages. As the Project on Government Oversight testified:

Permanent IGs are in a better position to be viewed as credible than are Acting IGs for a number of reasons. One is that permanent IGs are selected for the position on the basis of their qualifications to lead an IG office, whereas a temporary IG may be a good auditor or investigator, but may not be as qualified for a leadership role. That is especially true for the IGs that require a nomination by the President with confirmation by the Senate—they go through a rigorous vetting process, which helps establish that both Congress and the President believe they are qualified for the position.

In the context of upcoming confirmation hearings for Senator John Kerry as your nominee to become the next Secretary of State, we are sure that the question of who you plan to nominate to serve as Inspector General for the State Department will be a top priority for Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle.

Sincerely,

Darrell E. Issa
Chairman

Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member

Jason Chaffetz
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security

John F. Tierney
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security